



St Weonards Academy  
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

January 2023

Next Review Due: January 2024

Co-ordinator – Mrs A Doughty and Miss K Darby

***“Around here, we don’t look backwards for very long...  
we keep moving forward, opening up new doors  
and doing new things  
because we’re curious....  
and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths”  
Walt Disney***

The research is clear: a child’s early education lasts a lifetime. An excellent early education is the foundation for later success. At St Weonards Academy we provide a high quality education to give every child the best possible start and we are aspirational for ALL pupils.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St Weonards Academy. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS settings, including both teaching and non-teaching staff. It is the responsibility of the SLT to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

## **Aims**

**St Weonards Academy EYFS setting strives to provide:**

**Quality and consistency** in our setting, so that every child makes good progress from their starting points and no child gets left behind;

**A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;

**Partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and carers;

**Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

**Confident, motivated and happy learners**, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.

## Principles

Within Early Years education we offer our children learning that is based on the following principles:

- Build on what each child already knows and can do;
- Inclusivity to all groups of learners and individuals, taking into account children's backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, EAL and SEND;
- Provide a rich and stimulating environment, including challenging, exciting and imaginative indoor and outdoor learning environments;
- Provide a wide range of opportunities for independent learning, adult directed learning, adult-led learning and child-initiated learning;
- Encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning;
- Provide a positive, supportive environment where children feel safe and secure to learn;
- Develop positive attitudes towards learning from an early age;
- Provide knowledge based on the Early Years Foundation Stage seven areas of learning;
- Provide an extensive range of opportunities for assessment in well thought out and detailed planning;

## Admissions

**Pre-School** - Application forms for admissions are available directly from the school office.

**Reception** - Parents of children who require a Reception place will apply online to their Local Authority. Please see the school admissions department of our local authority, the school website and/or our Admission Policy for details.

All prospective parents are invited to visit the academies and are taken on an informal tour.

## Legislation

### **Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Teaching in the EYFS at St Weonards Academy is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document, 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.'

# Curriculum

## Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in the EYFS at St Weonards Academy. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

### These three Prime Areas, are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

### Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## Teaching & Learning

***“Tell me and I forget, teach me and  
I may remember, involve me and I learn”***

***Benjamin Franklin***

Practitioners will consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and will use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Each area of learning and development will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

### **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment
- Supporting children's learning through planned play
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play
- Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning
- Narrating children's play
- Asking questions about children's play

### **Adult-led teaching strategies**

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. In these slots we often focus on social skills, topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. At St Weonards Academy we emphasise rigour and structure in all activities to ensure meaningful educational and developmental outcomes for every child. In St Weonards Academy, regular focused teaching of phonics, literacy and maths is from the outset and is a key part of our curriculum for Reception children.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults. Children have daily access to well-planned stimulating learning environments, indoors and outdoors. These environments give children opportunities to be active and physical and also quiet and reflective.

## **Assessment**

### **Baseline:**

Prior to children starting, staff spend time speaking to the child's parents, previous settings and read previous learning journal's and 2-year progress checks to gain an understanding of the whole child and where they are at. During the first half term in Pre-School or Reception, all staff use ongoing assessments, observations and conversations with the child to develop a baseline assessment. This identifies each individual's starting points in all areas so we can plan experiences to ensure progress.

### **Progress check at age two**

When a child joins the setting between age two and three practitioners will review their progress and provide a short written summary to parents and/or carers of their child's development in the prime areas. This progress check will identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. Where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay, activities and strategies (including referrals to other professionals) for ways in which the child will be supported moving forward will also be discussed and actioned.

### **The RBA (Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment)**

The RBA will be administered to Reception aged children within the first six weeks of them starting school in line with the statutory guidance. This assessment focuses on 'Language, Communication and Literacy,' and 'Mathematics.' The purpose of this is to show the progress children make from Reception until the end of KS2.

### **Ongoing Observation:**

All ongoing observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing / making. Some observations are uploaded using SeeSaw and shared with the supporting parents and carers.

Phonic assessments are carried out half-termly to quickly identify pupils that are not making expected progress. Our aim is for children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' where possible.

In the summer term of Reception, the EYFS Profile will be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile will reflect on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents/carers and any other adults whom the teacher, parent/carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Practitioners will indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development ('Expected') or are working towards the expected levels ('Emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

Year 1 teachers will be given a copy of the Profile report together with a discussion on each child's skills and abilities in the seven areas of learning. These will inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

St Weonards Academy will share the results of the profile with parents and carers and explain when and how they can discuss the Profile with the teacher who completed it.

The Profile will be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities will be made as appropriate. Children will have differing levels of skills and abilities across the Profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development, to inform plans for future activities and to identify any additional support needs.

## **Transitions**

### **Transition to Pre-School**

We understand that starting Pre-School is an exciting time for children, but it can also be a challenging and anxious time for both children and their parents/carers. At St Weonards Academy we are committed to putting the needs of the child first whilst working with each other, with parents/carers and with other professionals to make transitions as smooth as possible for all concerned.



We provide “settling in sessions” for children before their start date. This is in the form of a “stay and play” session where the parent/carer would stay with their child so that they become familiar with the environment, the routines and the members of staff. This is also a good time to go over any specific needs, basic home routines, likes/dislikes etc.

As mentioned under assessment children will receive a progress check between the age of two and three. Ongoing formative assessment will then continue throughout the child’s pre-school journey which will be used to shape teaching and learning experiences for each individual child. A progress report on the child will be completed by the child’s key person and handed over to the Reception staff prior to the child moving over (if different class/ setting). This information will contain any additional needs, developmental goals and next steps.

### **Induction/Transition to Reception**

A Parent information meeting is held in the summer for parents of the prospective Reception classes. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to the school, to disseminate important information about routines and the curriculum, to encourage discussion and to emphasise the vital importance of home-school co-operation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all of our children.

During the second half of the summer term, the school holds several settling in sessions, to enable each child to explore their new learning environment and meet their teacher. Links will be made with the pre-school settings (if different) and where practicable the class teacher will make a visit.

## **Transition to Year 1**

Towards the end of the Reception year, the teachers will begin to prepare the children for Year 1.

We do this at St Weonards Academy by:

- Providing a continuous provision environment alongside adult-led learning for at least the Autumn Term in Year 1.
- Scheduling a 'Meet the Teacher' day, when all classes will spend part of the day with their new teacher in their new classroom.
- Presenting to parents the expectations for a child in Year 1, the differences in timetable, homework and learning.
- Allowing time for the teachers of the existing classes to 'handover' to the Year 1 teachers, giving information on family background, learning styles, friendship groups, academic ability, progress achieved through the year etc.
- Ensuring we have an open-door policy for any concerns the parents and/or children may have.

## **Inclusion**

***“Every child deserves a champion-an  
adult who will never give up on them,  
who understands the power of connection  
and insists that they become the best that they can be”***

***Rita Pierson***

At St Weonards Academy we believe that all children matter and have equal rights - irrespective of the child's special educational need(s), disability, gender or ethnicity. Consequently, we aim to be a fully inclusive school - as described in our Equality Policy. We give our children every opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences in order to help them to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's communication needs, any disability and their range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. This is outlined in school Accessibility Plans, which is an annually revised document outlining how each school intends to meet the needs for all children to access learning.

## **Parents as partners**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care.

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We recognise this role by:

- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through an open-door policy and through Parent/Teacher meetings
- Encouraging parents to complete the home/school 'All about me' admissions booklet
- Holding parent information sessions to outline our curriculum provision and teaching methods and to provide an opportunity for asking questions
- Encouraging them to support their child in home learning activities;
- Encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Providing various activities that involve parents and carers such as inviting them to meetings and share sessions, as well as SEND meetings in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking in class and how they can continue to work with their child at home;
- Holding parents' evenings, discussing individual next steps and progress;
- Sharing progress at school through photographs and observations via SeeSaw;
- Sending home an annual written report to parents/carers on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

## **Safeguarding/Welfare of Pupils**

The class teacher is responsible for the pastoral care of each child as well as the academic side of school life. Named members of each school's Early Years teaching team are qualified in Paediatric First Aid. Medication will be kept well out of reach of pupils and administered in accordance with the Medicines in School Policy.

A school behaviour policy is in place and followed on entry to Early Years. All safeguarding and child protection concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and procedures followed in accordance with St Weonards Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

